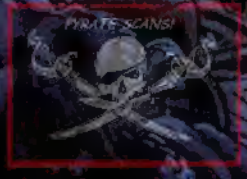
Negation

WAR

PART ONE



CrossGen
APRIL
2004

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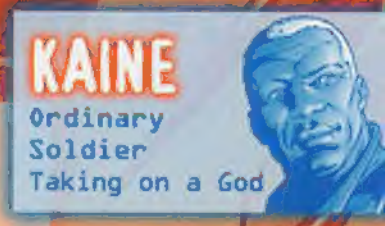
The God-Emperor CHARON conquered His chaotic universe and forged an intergalactic empire known as:

the Negation

On the road to absolute power, Charon brooked no opposition. He even banished His closest ally, Appolyon, to a hellish pocket dimension. Now Charon leads His intergalactic military across the gulf between realities to conquer the bright and thriving worlds in our cosmos...



KAINE
Ordinary Soldier Taking on a God

CHARON
Negation Emperor

EVINLEA
Charon's Consort Traitor to her Universe

APPOLYON
Charon's Fallen Partner Seeking Revenge

DANIK
Trickster-God Charon's Enemy

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WHEN THE WAR FINALLY CAME, EVEN THOSE WHO HAD BEEN "PREPARED" WERE CAUGHT OFF GUARD...
MORNING, TAYLOR.
WORLD'S GREATEST DAD
GOOD MORNING, JACKIE.
TOMMY STILL HAVE THE SNIFFLES?
HE'S BETTER, BUT CAROL'S KEEPING HIM HOME TODAY JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE. YOU KNOW HOW OVER-PROTECTIVE SHE CAN BE.
Mm-hm. GUESS IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY...
Um... I'M NOT SURE I FOLLOW YOU...
Oh, I THINK YOU DO.
WE MISSED YOU AT THE COMPANY DINNER LAST NIGHT. YOU DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT NOT SHOWING.
NOT TOO BUSY BEING "OVER-PROTECTIVE," WERE YOU...?
Tri-City Tribune
CRASH AVERTED BY MIGHTY-MAN

NO...
SOMETHING CAME UP...
SOMETHING ALWAYS "COMES UP" WITH YOU, TAYL—
JACKIE...?

THOOOM
ZARK
KROOM
ZARK
ZARK
WHOOOSH!

PLEASE I HAVE A WIFE
DID YOU KISS HER GOODBYE THIS MORNING?
Y-YES
THAT'S NICE...
GARCIA

FAN OUT AND SECURE THE CITY CENTER! SLAY ANYTHING THAT MOVES!
ALL UNITS! STERILIZE THE L.Z. OUT TO A SIX KLIK RADIUS!
I'D LIKE TO GET THE MOOD JUST RIGHT AROUND HERE BEFORE HE ARRIVES...
=WHULP=
KRAKOOM
EXCELLENT. YOU SAVED ME THE TROUBLE OF FINDING YOU.

WHOEVER YOU PEOPLE ARE...

...YOU JUST PICKED THE *WRONG PLANET* TO MESS WITH!

THOOM

WHERE'D YOU *COME* FROM...?

WE'LL *GET* TO THAT.

RIGHT NOW, I JUST NEED TO ENSURE--

--THAT YOU'RE READY TO *LISTEN!*

HGH

DON'T GET UP.
IF YOU FORCE ME TO STRIKE AGAIN, I'LL MOST LIKELY *KILL* YOU...
...AND MY LORD WANTS YOU *ALIVE*...
mmmmm--
FWASH
Ah, GOOD-- STILL IN *ONE PIECE*, I SEE. YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHAT ALL THE *FUSS* IS ABOUT.
I AM *CHARON*, GOD-EMPEROR OF THE NEGATION UNIVERSE.
YOU'VE ALREADY MET MY CONSORT, THE LADY *EVINLEA*.
YOU SEEM LIKE A GOOD MAN... AN *INTELLIGENT* MAN. I CERTAINLY HOPE SO, BECAUSE I WANT A *WORD* WITH YOU.
...YOU CAN HAVE *THREE* WORDS...

"...GO TO HELL."
SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. YOU AND CHARON USED TO BE PARTNERS?
IT WAS A VERY LONG TIME AGO, BUT, YES, THAT'S ESSENTIALLY IT.
BACK THEN, WE WERE BOTH ORDINARY MEN, NOT UNLIKE YOURSELF, OBREGON KAINE.
YOU'VE... HEARD OF ME?
BUT OF COURSE!
CHARON MAY HAVE TRAPPED ME IN THIS COZY LITTLE POCKET DIMENSION, BUT I STILL MANAGE TO KEEP UP WITH CURRENT EVENTS...
SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS WERE KIDNAPPED FROM THE GOOD OLD MILKY WAY AND BROUGHT TO THE NEGATION UNIVERSE.
YOU LED THE BREAKOUT FROM THE NEGATION PRISON, AND YOU'VE FOUGHT A RUNNING BATTLE AGAINST CHARON'S STOOGES EVER SINCE!

DON'T YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE RAPIDLY BECOMING THE STUFF OF LEGEND?
YOU'VE CAUSED QUITE A STIR AMONG ALL THE RIGHT PEOPLE.
IMPOSSIBLE
WE HAVE MAINTAINED A LOW PROFILE IN OUR TRAVELS
THERE'S A NEGATION RESISTANCE MOVEMENT OUT THERE.
YOU SHOULD KNOW, "LIZARD LADY"-- YOU PEOPLE FREED THEIR LEADER.
YOU MEAN BLYQ
YES, BLYQ, HE'S SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT YOU, AND IT'S VERY INSPIRING STUFF, INDEED.
I WONDER WHO'LL PLAY YOU IN THE MOVIE...
ANYHOW, YOU CAME HERE SEEKING MY HELP AGAINST THE NEGATION.
THE FACT IS, WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER.
BUT YOU'LL NEED A LITTLE BACKGROUND TO UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M GETTING AT.
AS YOU CAN SEE, I LIKE TO TINKER. STANDS TO REASON, SINCE I STARTED OUT AS AN INVENTOR BACK ON A PLANET CALLED EARTH.
MY SPECIALTY WAS MATTER-ENERGY CONVERSION, AND ITS APPLICATIONS IN THE DEFENSE INDUSTRY.
IN OTHER WORDS, I MADE BOMBS.

CHARON WAS A GLORIFIED *ARCHEOLOGIST* BACK THEN, AND HE NEEDED MY EXPERTISE FOR A *PROJECT* HE WAS WORKING ON.
THAT'S HOW WE *MET*. IF I HAD ONLY SAID *"NO,"* HE'D BE *DUST* RIGHT NOW, INSTEAD OF THREATENING EVERY LIVING THING IN THE UNIVERSE...
HE SAID HE'D FOUND A LOST CITY CALLED *ATLANTIS*.
HE WAS TRYING TO *RECREATE* SOMETHING HE'D DISCOVERED THERE--A MEANS OF...*ASCENDING* TO WHAT HE CALLED *"A HIGHER PLANE OF EXISTENCE."*
IT SOUNDED TOO INTERESTING TO PASS UP. PLUS, I WAS IN *JAIL* AT THE TIME, SO HOW COULD I SAY *NO*?
THERE'S *MORE* TO THE STORY, BUT THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT THE DEVICE WE BUILT LEFT US BOTH WITH GODLIKE POWERS--NOT TO MENTION THIS *STELLAR* COMPLEXION--
--*AND* IT THREW US--ALONG WITH EVERYONE *ELSE* ON EARTH--RIGHT OUT OF THE MILKY WAY AND INTO THE NEGATION UNIVERSE.
CHARON'S POWER EDGED OUT MINE, AND HE *BANISHED* ME THE MINUTE I STOPPED DANCING TO HIS TUNE. BUT I'VE BEEN *BUSY* DOWN HERE, BUILDING *THIS*.
AND WHAT EXACTLY *IS* THAT?
LET'S JUST SAY IT'S GUARANTEED TO *RUIN* A CERTAIN GOD-EMPEROR'S DAY.

YOU'RE UPSET. THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE.
WE TEND TO BE A LITTLE HARD ON A WORLD WHEN WE FIRST SHOW UP.
BUT I AM NOT THE FIRST OVERBEING TO MEDDLE WITH YOUR LIFE.
AND AT LEAST I HAVE THE DECENCY TO BE UP FRONT ABOUT IT.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
COME NOW. IT ISN'T HARD TO FIGURE OUT: SOMEBODY GAVE YOU THE MEANS TO BECOME THIS GAUDY SUPER-CRIMEFIGHTER. DID THEY NOT?
SOMEBODY WHO HAS PROBABLY REMAINED IN YOUR LIFE AS A FRIEND, AN ADVISER, OR PERHAPS IN YOUR CASE AS A "SIDEKICK."
I HAVE SEEN YOUR LIKE BEFORE, SIGIL-BEARER. YOU ARE FAR FROM UNIQUE.
THAT RED AND YELLOW BRAND UPON YOUR SKIN, THE SOURCE OF YOUR POWER--
--WHOEVER MARKED YOU DID THE SAME FOR AN ARMY OF POOR DUPES SCATTERED ACROSS THE STARS.
YOU WERE SET UP TO FIGHT ME. YOU WERE SET UP TO FAIL.

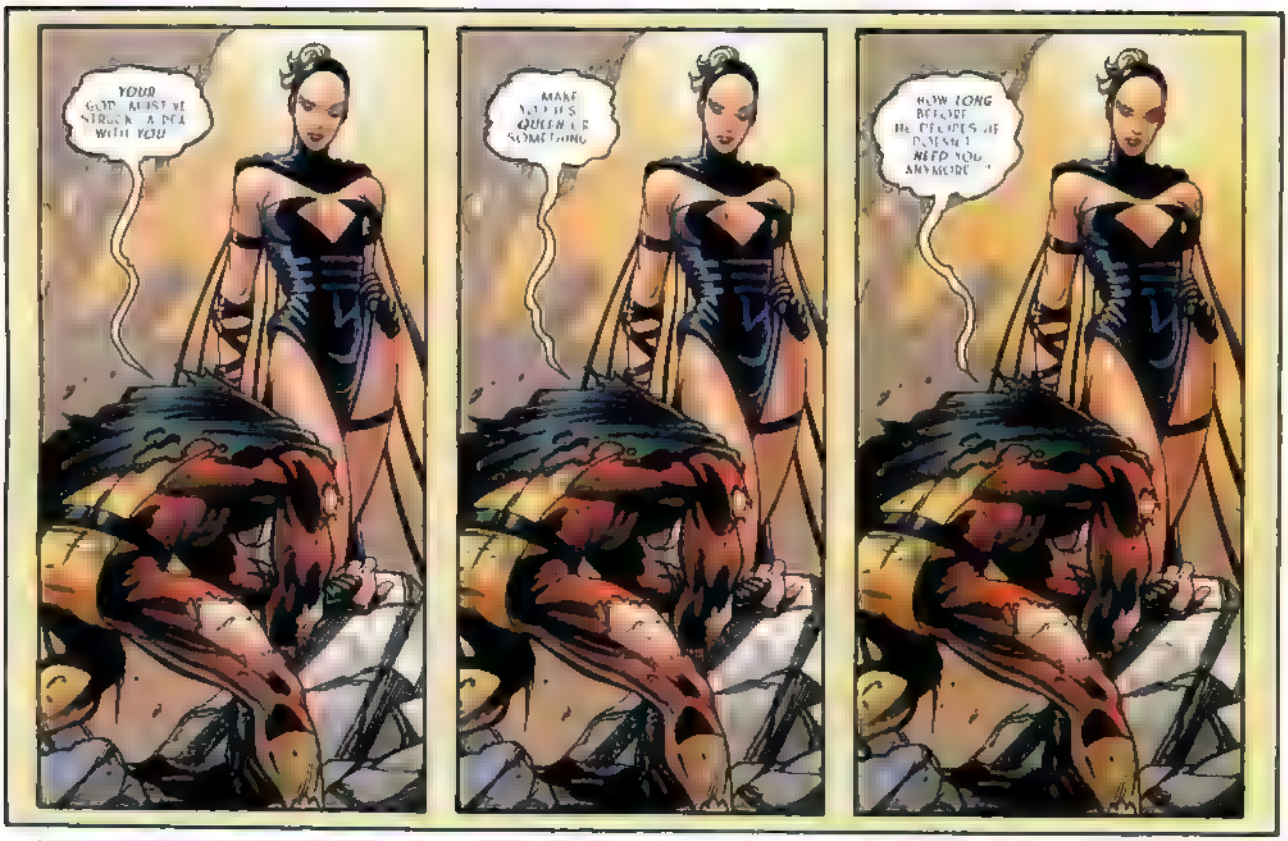
WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED IN THE NEGATION UNIVERSE, THE PLACE WAS A COMPLETE *MESS*.
CONSTANT WAR AND CHAOS--EVEN THE *LAWS OF PHYSICS* WERE SCRAMBLED.
MY ARMIES AND I IMPOSED *ORDER* AND BROUGHT *PROSPERITY* TO EVERY INHABITED WORLD. IT'S A *VAST* IMPROVEMENT, BELIEVE ME.
I WOULD LIKE TO DO THE SAME FOR *THIS* COSMOS.
AFTER ALL, I *AM* ORIGINALLY FROM THESE PARTS.
THERE'S ANOTHER UNIVERSE.
MY INVASION FLEETS ARE NOW MAKING INCURSIONS ON ALMOST EVERY INHABITED SYSTEM IN YOUR GALAXY.
ONLY *TWO* FACTORS POSE ANY REAL THREAT TO MY PLANS...
ONE IS THE SPECIES THAT SPAWNED MY LOVELY EVINLEA. THEY CALL THEMSELVES *THE FIRST*.
YOU'VE HAD A *TASTE* OF HER CAPABILITIES. IMAGINE A WHOLE WORLD OUT THERE SOMEWHERE *FULL* OF BEINGS LIKE HER.
THE *SECOND* CHALLENGE... THE ONE THAT CONCERNS ME EVEN *MORE*, IS WHOEVER *PUT* THAT SIGIL ON YOU.
CLEARLY, HE OR SHE *EXPECTED* MY ARRIVAL HERE AND TOOK EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES TO *STOP* ME.

PLACING THIS SIGIL UPON YOU REQUIRED A POWER LEVEL COMPARABLE TO MINE.
MEANING THAT WHOEVER IS RAISING A SUPER-ARMY AGAINST ME CAN DO THINGS AS PAINSTAKING AS RESEQUENCING YOUR D.N.A...
...AND AS GRANDIOSE AS RESHAPING ENTIRE PLANETS.
"SOUND LIKE ANYONE YOU KNOW?"
NO
THINK HARD. PERHAPS SOMEONE WITH ORANGE EYES...?
-GASP-
AH... THAT RANG A BELL.
THERE. DID YOU CATCH IT? HE JUST PICTURED HIS BENEFACTOR.
YES. I HAVE THE MENTAL IMAGE. SHALL I RETRIEVE HIM?
NO. THIS ENTITY WILL BE TOO POWERFUL, EVEN FOR YOU.
DISPOSE OF THIS LACKEY HOWEVER YOU PLEASE.
I'M GOING TO PAY OUR ORANGE-EYED

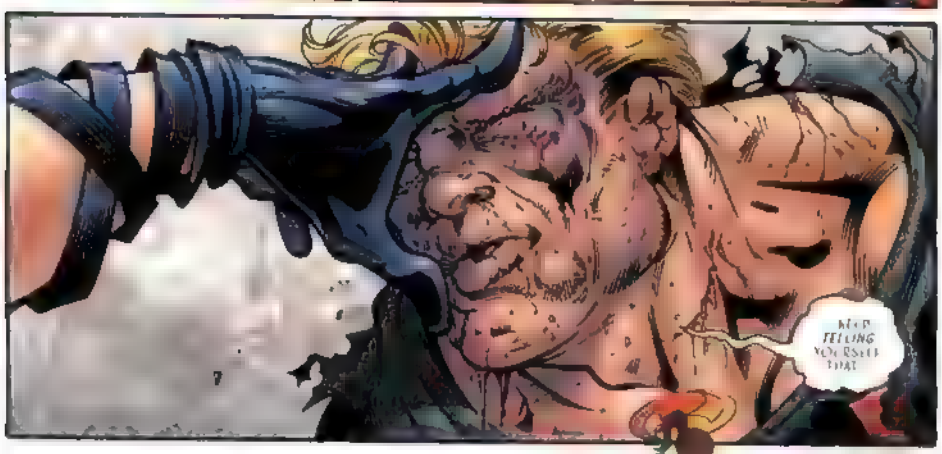
FWASH
I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU...
AH!
WHO ARE YOU, REALLY? WERE YOU ONCE A MAN, LIKE ME?
HOW DID YOU KNOW I WAS COMING? DID MY ADVANCE SCOUTS TIP YOU OFF, OR DO YOU HAVE SOME ENHANCED PERCEPTION THAT I LACK?
AND WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE ORANGE EYES?
BY THE TIME YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I AM, IT WILL BE TOO LATE FOR YOU
Oh, PLEASE... YOU'RE NOT ACTUALLY GOING TO TRY FIGHTING ME, ARE YOU?

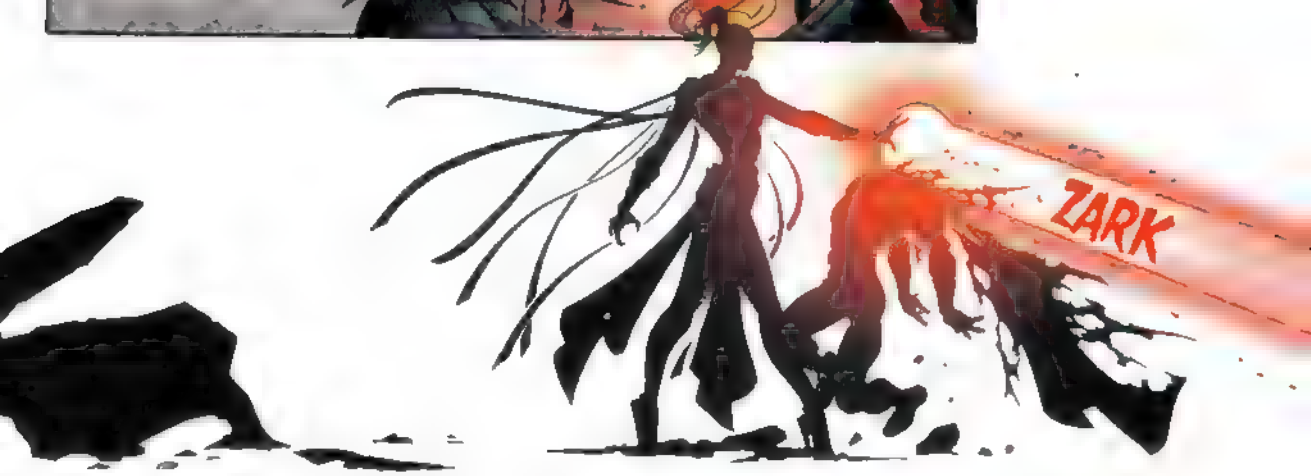
THAT WAS ACTUALLY... NOT BAD.
NOT QUITE IN MY LEAGUE, BUT FAR AHEAD OF ALMOST ANYONE ELSE.
...heh... I MUST SAY, AFTER EONS OF PRESIDING OVER MY EMPIRE WHILE UNDERLINGS DID ALL OF THE ACTUAL HANDS-ON WORK...
...THIS IS A WELCOME NOVELTY...
KRAKA-BOOM!

WHRAM
ANY LAST WORDS, THEN?
ASIDE FROM "GO TO HELL" OF COURSE
THRUNCH
I WAIT TO HAVE A FAMILY
NOT THIS AGAIN
I MUST BE SOME DEAL WE CAN MAKE TO SPARE THEM
AND WHY WOULD A GOD BARGAIN WITH THE LIKES OF YOU?


YOUR GOD MUST'VE STRUCK A DEAL WITH YOU
MAKE YOU HIS QUEEN OR SOMETHING
HOW LONG BEFORE HE DECIDES HE DOESN'T NEED YOU ANYMORE

NO MAN WHO HAS TASTED MY LIPS COULD EVER SPURN ME!


KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT


ZARK

SHOW ME.
SHOW ME YOUR TRUE FACE.
YOUR PSYCHIC BARRIERS ARE STARTING TO CRUMBLE...
-NNF-
YOU WILL REVEAL YOUR SECRETS--THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM ME.
YOU'VE CHOSEN TO PLAY A MOST DANGEROUS GAME, AND I'M AFRAID THIS IS CHECK-MATE.
NO, CHARON WE'RE STILL FAR FROM THE ENDGAME AND YOU CAN ONLY CHECK MATE A KING
THIS "NEWS BOY" WAS ONLY EVER A PAWN AND ANY GOOD CHESS PLAYER WILL SACRIFICE A PAWN
NO...!
TO TAKE A QUEEN!
EVINLEA--!

GENERAL BIBURZ TO TASK FORCE VECTOR! ALL VESSELS WITHDRAW FROM ORBIT IMMEDIATELY!
ENERGY READINGS HAVE SPIKED OFF THE SC-
-SQUARK-

FIRST, YOU'LL NEED PASSAGE BACK HOME TO TELL YOUR ALLIES ABOUT MY LITTLE SECRET WEAPON.
YES. MY OTHER SELVES MUST LEARN OF THIS OUR WHOLE STRATEGY MAY HAVE TO CHANGE
I KNOW SEVERAL ROUTES BACK TO YOUR UNIVERSE.
THIS ONE'S THE SHORTEST.
WAIT A MINUTE
IF YOU COULD DO THIS ALL ALONG, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST ESCAPE?
AND ABANDON MY WORK?
I'M NOT LEAVING UNTIL MY OLD PARTNER GETS WHAT'S COMING TO HIM.
YOU EXPECT US TO PASS THROUGH THERE?!
YOUR ORANGE-EYED FRIEND CAN CONDUCT YOU SAFELY ACROSS. IT ISN'T FAR.
HE'S RIGHT
LET'S GO
TELL ME AGAIN PO PO WHY DO YOU WANT ME TO STEAL BACK THE BOOK OF THE HELL OF THE HUNGRY DRAGONS?!

THE CURSED THING BROUGHT US NOTHING BUT MISFORTUNE BEFORE
I DO NOT WANT YOU TO TAKE IT BOOM
MERELY WANT YOU TO OPEN OUR MOTHER'S CABINET SO OUR GUESTS WILL HAVE ROOM TO ARRIVE
-GUESTS-?!
-GUHH!-
I THOUGHT APOLLYON WAS SENDING US HOME
CLOSE ENOUGH. THIS WORLD IS CALLED HAN JIN. IT ORBITS A STAR IN OUR OWN UNIVERSE. I'LL TAKE US THE REST OF THE WAY FROM HERE
YOU'RE LATE! ONE OF US AND HIS SIGIL BEARER HAVE ALREADY FALLEN TO THE NEGATION!
TAKE HEART, BROTHER. WE MAY HAVE LOCATED A MEANS OF NEUTRALIZING CHARON HIMSELF
BUT IT WILL REQUIRE A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL
NEXT: THE GATHERING OF HEROES!

Negation WAR

PART TWO

CrossGen
JUNE
2004

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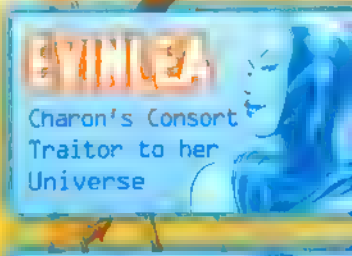
Laura Martin

The God-Emperor CHARON conquered His chaotic universe and forged an intergalactic empire known as:

the Negation

Now Charon leads His intergalactic military across the gulf between realities to conquer the bright and thriving worlds in our cosmos. But this invasion was anticipated by Charon's enemy, Danik, who helped create an army of super-powered "Sigil-Bearers" to fight back. In their first encounter, Danik destroyed an entire planet in his bid to take down Charon and his ruthless consort, Evinlea. Billions were sacrificed in this desperate gambit, but was the Negation Emperor among the dead...?



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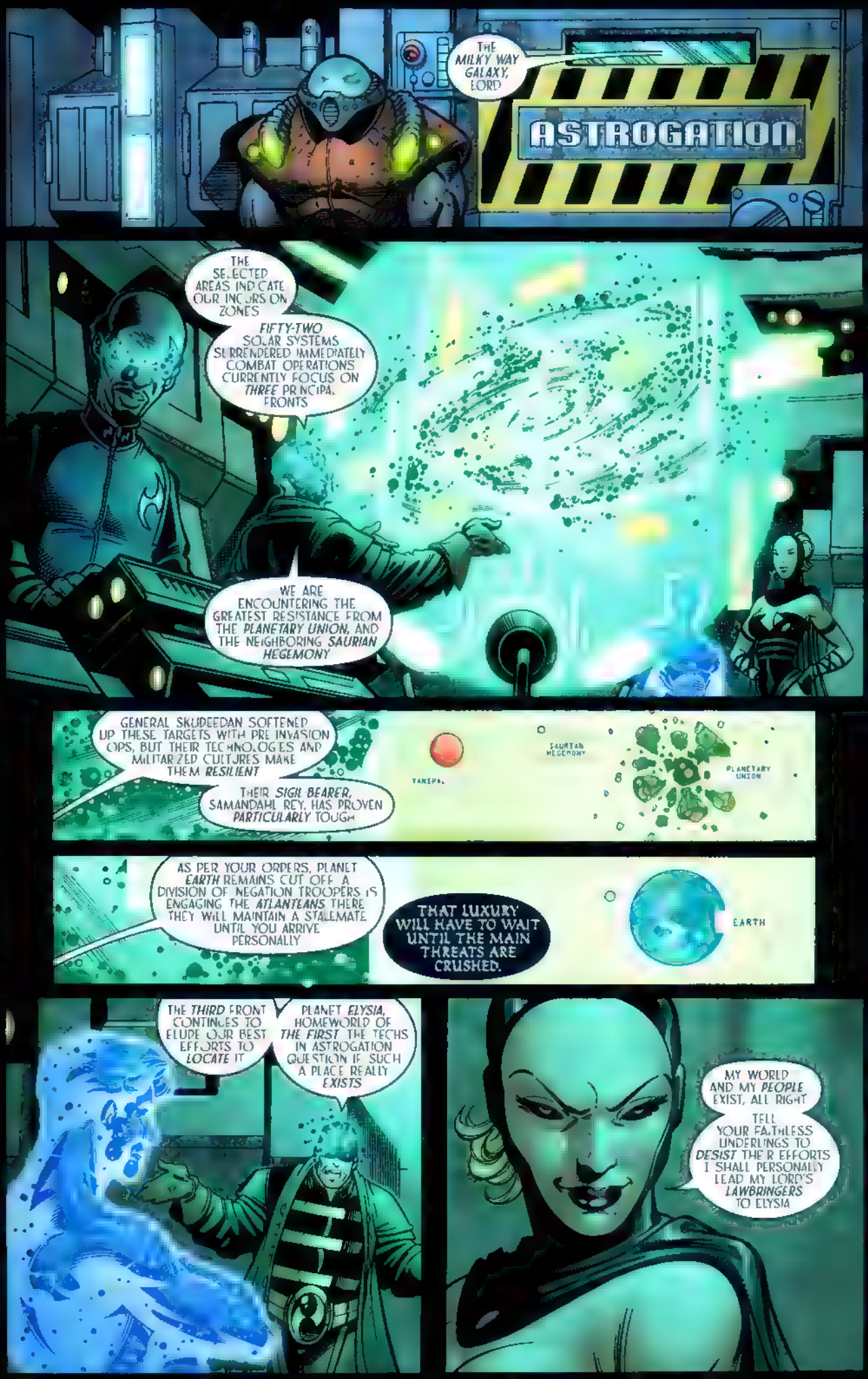
THE MILKY WAY GALAXY
NEGATION FLAGSHIP FORGE.
GENERAL KRYZORR, ALL SCOUT DETACHMENTS HAVE REPORTED BACK. SITREPS ARE COLLATING
WE SHOULD HAVE AN UPDATED THEATER-WIDE INTEL BRIEF MOMENTARILY
THERE'S ONLY ONE SOLAR SYSTEM I'M INTERESTED IN RIGHT NOW COLONEL!
THE EMPEROR WAS ON A PLANET THAT BLEW UP GET US THERE FAST
--OR I'...
I...
SIR ?
BRIDGE CREW! EMPEROR CHARON HAS JUST CONTACTED ME!
AVERT YOUR GAZE! EMPEROR BOARDING!

FWASH
MY LORD! WE LOST OUR SENSOR-LOCK ON YOU WHEN THE PLANET EXPLODED! THE ENTIRE BATTLE GROUP IS DESTROYED AND I I THOUGHT YOU
I'M FINE, KRYZORR. JUST RAN INTO A LITTLE WRINKLE IN OUR BATTLE PLAN, BUT NOTHING WE CAN'T OVERCOME.
I'LL EXPLAIN, AFTER YOU UPDATE ME ON OUR PROGRESS ELSEWHERE.
COLONEL! THE INTEL BRIEF 9!
RIGHT THIS WAY SIR!


THE MILKY WAY GALAXY, LORD
ASTROGATION
THE SELECTED AREAS INDICATE OUR INCURSION ZONES
FIFTY-TWO SOLAR SYSTEMS SURRENDERED IMMEDIATELY COMBAT OPERATIONS CURRENTLY FOCUS ON THREE PRINCIPAL FRONTS
WE ARE ENCOUNTERING THE GREATEST RESISTANCE FROM THE PLANETARY UNION, AND THE NEIGHBORING SAURIAN HEGEMONY
GENERAL SKUDEEDAN SOFTENED UP THESE TARGETS WITH PRE INVASION OPS, BUT THEIR TECHNOLOGIES AND MILITARIZED CULTURES MAKE THEM RESILIENT
THEIR SIGIL BEARER, SAMANDAHL REY, HAS PROVEN PARTICULARLY TOUGH
TANIPAL
SAURIAN HEGEMONY
PLANETARY UNION
AS PER YOUR ORDERS, PLANET EARTH REMAINS CUT OFF. A DIVISION OF NEGATION TROOPERS IS ENGAGING THE ATLANTEANS THERE. THEY WILL MAINTAIN A STALEMATE UNTIL YOU ARRIVE PERSONALLY
THAT LUXURY WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE MAIN THREATS ARE CRUSHED.
EARTH
THE THIRD FRONT CONTINUES TO ELUDE OUR BEST EFFORTS TO LOCATE IT
PLANET ELYSIA, HOMEWORLD OF THE FIRST. THE TECHS IN ASTROGATION QUESTION IF SUCH A PLACE REALLY EXISTS
MY WORLD AND MY PEOPLE EXIST, ALL RIGHT
TELL YOUR FAITHLESS UNDERLINGS TO DESIST THEIR EFFORTS. I SHALL PERSONALLY LEAD MY LORD'S LAWBRINGERS TO ELYSIA

WITH AL, DUE RESPECT, WAR CONSUL EVIN.EA, I AM IN COMMAND OF MILITARY OPERATIONS.
IT'S OKAY, KRYZORR. LEAVE ELYSIA TO HER AND MY CHILDREN.
THE LAWBRINGERS NEVER PLAYED WELL WITH YOUR CONVENTIONAL FORCES, ANYWAY.
YES, LORD.
BACK TO YOUR EARLIER CONCERNS, THE WORLD WE WERE ON WAS DESTROYED BY A NEW PLAYER IN OUR STRUGGLE. I BARELY MANAGED TO SAVE EVINLEA.
THIS NEW ENEMY IS VERY POWERFUL, KRYZORR--PERHAPS EVEN ON MY LEVEL.
HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE, LORD?
WE'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH. I SUSPECT HE CREATED THE SIGIL-BEARERS WE'VE FOUND SCATTERED AMONG THE INHABITED WORLDS HERE.
INFORM THE TROOPS THAT IF ANYONE WITH ORANGE EYES IS ENCOUNTERED, THEY ARE NOT TO ENGAGE DIRECTLY, BUT CALL FOR ME IMMEDIATELY.
THIS ENTITY I JUST FOUGHT CAN LOOK LIKE ANYONE. THE EYES WILL BE THE KEY.
DO YOU KNOW THIS ENEMY'S NAME, LORD?
I TRIED TO READ HIS MIND, BUT HE KEPT ME AT BAY.
STILL, HE WAS WILLING TO SACRIFICE THAT ENTIRE PLANET, INCLUDING THE SIGIL-BEARER PROTECTING IT, TO KEEP ME FROM LEARNING HIS SECRETS...

"...I BELIEVE THAT ON SOME WORLD OUT THERE IS THE KEY TO HIS PLANS--ONE SIGIL-BEARER AROUND WHOM THE OTHERS MUST RALLY IF THEY ARE TO HAVE ANY HOPE AGAINST US."
PLANET TANIPAL
SAM! WE'RE IN A BIT OF A SPOT HERE!
ROIYA, DO YOU READ ME? WHERE THE HELL IS SAM?!
SORRY, ZANNI, BUT I LOST TRACK OF HIM AFTER HE SHREDDED THAT NEGATION CRUISER
LOOK, WE'RE PINNED DOWN IN THE GZANTI QUARTER, NEAR THE EXPRESSWAY AND WE'RE OUTGUNNED!
OPEN A COMM TO SAM, AND TELL HIM TO GET HIS BIG, FAT
-WHOA
NEVER MIND
SLIMEFEST

YOU NEGATIONOIDS BOUGHT YERSELVES ENOUGH TROUBLE INVADIN' MY END OF SPACE

BUT YOU GO AFTER MY GIRL Y'MAY AS WELL STICK YER GUN IN YER MOUTH!

SHKROOMF

ALERT! ALERT!

HE'S HERE!!

TARGET SAMANDAH! REY IS

WHUNG

YOU OKAY ZANN?

YOU COULD'VE LEFT *SOMEBODY* FOR ME TO SHOOT

SAM WE NEED TO TALK

NOW

FERGIT IT, JeMERik--!
YOUR WEIRD HINTS AND DOOMSDAY TALK CAN WAIT FOR FIVE MINUTES!
NO, SAM =OOOMPH=
DAMM T, SAM, TODAY IS DOOMSDAY! THE TIME FOR HINTS AND SUBTERFUGE IS OVER!
COME AGAIN?
THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED NEGATION FORCES ARE NOW ARRIVING IN KEY SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE
EVEN CHARON HIMSELF HAS CROSSED OVER WE NEED TO SPEAK VERY FRANKLY ABOUT WHAT IS REQUIRED OF YOU
HUH?!

WHERE ARE WE?!
WHO IS CHARON?
AND WHO THE BLAZES ARE YOU?!
WORLD'S GREATEST DAD

MY NAME IS DANIK
WHERE THE HELL'S JeMERIK?!
I AM JeMERIK JUST AS I AM ALL THE OTHERS
TO ANSWER YOUR OTHER QUESTIONS THIS, UNTIL TWENTY MINUTES AGO, WAS HOME TO FOUR BILLION SOULS
AND CHARON IS THE BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR DEATHS.
HE IS THE EMPEROR OF THE NEGATION FORCES YOU'VE SPENT SO MUCH TIME FIGHTING AS OF LATE
AW HOLY GOD!
I KNEW THE NEGATIONOIDS WERE BAD NEWS, BUT I NEVER THOUGHT
THEY ARE EVERYWHERE NOW, SAMANDAHL REY AT LONG LAST THE WAR IS UPON US, AND YOU HAVE A DUTY TO FULFILL
WAIT A MINUTE. WHAT DID YOU MEAN, YOU "ARE" JeMERIK?
I MEAN THAT JeMERIK IS AN ASPECT OF ME, AN ALIAS OF MINE IF YOU WILL. HE IS A SMALL PART OF MY CONSCIOUSNESS THAT I FISSIONED OFF TO LOOK AFTER YOU
"FISSIONED"?
THIS, SAM, AFTER ALL THIS TIME, THIS IS MY TRUE FACE
START TALKIN SENSE, OR I'M GONNA HAVE TA DECK YA

IT'S CONFUSING, I KNOW, BUT TRY TO *UNDERSTAND*
ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS AGO, I WAS BORN IN THE CITY-STATE OF *ATLANTIS*, ON A PLANET CALLED *EARTH*
MY PEOPLE WERE *GIFTED* IN WAYS YOU CAN SCARCELY IMAGINE
WE UNIFIED OUR MINDS TO ACHIEVE *TRANSITION* - A CONSCIOUS ACT OF MASS EVOLUTION THAT TRANSFORMED US INTO *GODS*
AFTERWARD, MY PEOPLE NO LONGER *CARED* ABOUT THE MORTAL PLANE THEY MOVED ON TO MORE *COSMIC* PURSUITS
ONLY *SOLUSANDRA* AND I MAINTAINED AN INTEREST IN EARTHLY MATTERS
LATER, WHEN I DISCOVERED THAT THE NEGATION WOULD ONE DAY *THREATEN* OUR UNIVERSE, I DUPED SOLUSANDRA INTO RAISING AN *ARMY*
SO, *WHERE* IS THIS ARMY?
YOU'RE *IN* IT, SAM
YOU AND EVERYONE *ELSE* ACROSS THE STARS MARKED BY HER *SIGIL*

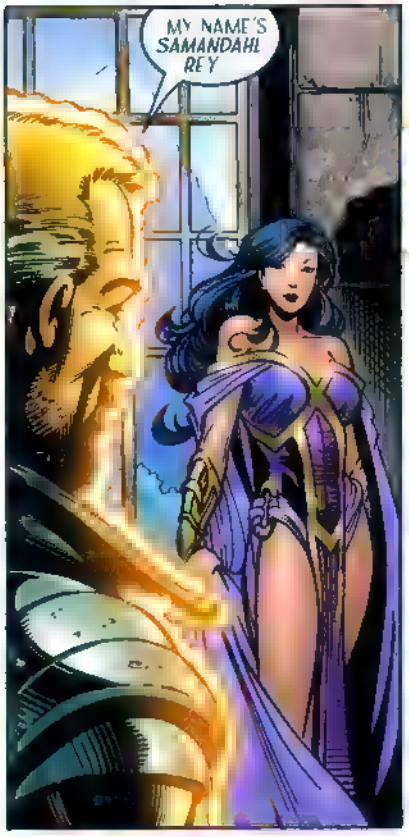
BUT YOU ARE ALSO UNIQUE AMONG SIGIL BEARERS, SAM. I CHOSE YOU TO GATHER THE OTHERS AND TO LEAD THEM
YOU HAVE USED YOUR SIGIL BEFORE TO TRANSPORT YOURSELF TO OTHER WORLDS, DRAWN TO THOSE LIKE YOURSELF
GO NOW SAMANDAHL REY AND CALL THEM TO BATTLE
THE TIME HAS COME FOR ALL OF YOU TO UNITE AGAINST THE FALSE GOD CHARON
FACE HIM SEPARATELY, AND YOU'LL SHARE THE FATE OF THIS WORLD'S CHAMPION
SO YOU AND THIS SOLUS PERSON RUINED MY LIFE AND THE LIVES OF A BUNCHA OTHER POOR SUCKERS OUT THERE
STICKING US WITH THESE "GIFTS" WE NEVER ASKED FOR, PAINTING THESE BULLSEYES ON US!
BUT IT'S OKAY, BECAUSE YOU STUCK AROUND, LYING ABOUT WHO YOU WERE AND MAKIN' US JUMP THROUGH HOOPS LIKE TRAINED DOGS!
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME?
YES
I MADE A CHOICE BETWEEN ABUSING YOUR TRUST OR SAVING HUMANKIND. NOW YOU MUST CHOOSE. WILL IT BE OUTRAGE OR DUTY?

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN* YOU CANNOT FIND *ANY TRACE* OF HER?
I TOLD YOU THE WITCH HAS *ORANGE EYES!* SURELY THAT LITTLE DETAIL WOULD GET NOTICED BY *SOMEONE!*
PLEASE, LORD MORDATH, WE'VE TORTURED CAPTIVES ACROSS ALL THE FIVE LANDS, BUT *NONE* HAVE EVER SEEN OR EVEN *HEARD* OF THIS "NEVEN" PERSON!
WE WILL *REDOUBLE* OUR EFFORTS
DON'T BOTHER. I'LL ASSIGN THE TASK TO MORE *ZEALOUS* TRO...S
FWOOOSH
AIEEEE!
GUARDS! REMOVE THIS GARBAGE IMMEDIATELY! I SHALL BE *eh?*

HE...O HOPE I DIDN'T SCARE YOU POPPING IN LIKE THIS, BUT
MASTER!
WHOA THERE, FELLAS! I'M NOT HERE TO HURT YOUR BOSS!
THAT SYMBOL ON YOUR CHEST! HOW DID YOU ACQUIRE IT?!
SAME WAY YOU GOT YOURS, I'L. BET
Y KNOW YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY WHAT EXPECTED
EXPLAIN YOURSELF! DID NEVEN SEND YOU?
NEVEN? ACTUALLY, IT WAS A GUY NAMED DANIK HIM AND SOMEONE NAMED SOLUS SOMETHIN' WENT AROUND GIVING OUT THESE SIGIL THINGS
UNTIL THIS MOMENT I THOUGHT THEY ONLY GAVE 'EM TO GOOD PEOPLE, BUT

LOOK, I'VE COME TO TELL YA THAT THERE'S MORE PEOPLE LIKE US OUT THERE
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO GET TOGETHER AND FIGHT OFF AN ARMY CALLED "THE NEGATION"
THEY'RE uh, FROM A WHOLE OTHER UNIVERSE, AND THEY'RE A THREAT TO EVERY INHABITED WORLD THERE IS.
IF YOU CAN BELIEVE IT
SO WILL YOU COME HELP US FIGHT?
WHAT UTTER NONSENSE!
AND WHAT GALL TO COME UNBIDDEN INTO THE FORTRESS OF MORDATH WITH SUCH A BALD FACED LIE ABOUT SOME MENACE FROM THE STARS !
LOOK, MORDATH I SEE I INTERRUPTED A REAL NICE BARBECUE HERE, AND MAYBE YOU GUYS HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO, LIKE INVENTING INDOOR PLUMBING, AND BREATH MINTS, AND STUFF
BUT THE NEGATION IS REAL AND THEY'RE NOT GOING AWAY ON THEIR OWN
EITHER FIGHT THEM WITH US NOW OR FIGHT THEM LATER ON YOUR OWN DOORSTEP
MY GUT SAYS I MIGHT BE BETTER OFF NOT EXTENDIN' YOU THE OFFER, BUT I NEED EVERY SOLDIER I CAN GET SO
IF I AGREE, WILL I MEET THESE PEOPLE YOU SPOKE OF DANIK AND SOLUSUMTHIN ?
YEAH, YOU'LL MEET DANIK =HEH= THE ORANGE EYED JERK DESERVES TO GET A SNOOTFUL OF YOU
ORANGE-EYED YOU SAY ?

Ah, HE BRINGS ANOTHER
FOLKS, THIS IS MORDATH HE'S A BIG DEAL WHERE HE COMES FROM. SO SHOW 'IM SOME RESPECT WHILE I'M OFF TO FETCH THE REST OF THE TROOPS
MORDATH, IF YOU'LL PLEASE WAIT WITH THESE FINE PEOPLE AND TRY NOT TO KILL ANY OF THEM WHILE I'M GONE ?
I DEMAND TO SPEAK WITH DANIK AT ONCE!
SOON, MORDATH!
WELCOME TO THE WAR MORDATH! I'M JOHNNY JUMPJET, HERO OF THE HELIX WORLDS!
SO uh WHAT ARE YOU THE HERO OF ?



PLANET HAN-JIN

WHO DO YOU *THINK*?! THE *DEVIL* GUY! *APPOLYON*! WHO *OH SO CONVENIENTLY* OFFERS HIS SECRET WEAPON RIGHT WHEN WE NEED IT MOST!
KAINE, WE HAVE NO *CHOICE* BUT TO ACCEPT HIS OFFER CHARON'S PERSONAL POWER IS EVEN GREATER THAN *MINE*!
THIS APPOLYON ENTITY WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN CHARON'S *CREATION* - HE WOULD KNOW IF THE EMPEROR HAS A SECRET VULNERABILITY
ZAMIRA, WE HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT COMES *AFTER* WE KILL CHARON
BACK WHEN I WAS IN THE SERVICE, WE HAD A *MASS-MURDERER* FOR A PRESIDENT IN THE END, I WAS FORCED TO *DO HIM IN*
A NEW GUY WHO WAS JUST AS *BAD* STEPPED IN THE *NEXT DAY*! THAT'S WHAT I'M AFRAID *APPOLYON* IS WAITING TO DO
ANYHOW, ARE WE JUST GONNA WANDER THIS BACKWARD PLANET WHILE THE NEGATION LAYS WASTE TO ANY *ADVANCED* CIVILIZATIONS OUT THERE?
YES, ZAMIRA SHOULD WE NOT *CONTACT* YOUR ALTER EGO, DANIK, OR WARN EVINLEA'S PEOPLE THAT SHE TURNED *AGAINST* THEM ?!
IN A MINUTE
KONICHI WA OBO SAN OUR PATHS WERE FATED TO CROSS THIS DAY
?
I BEG YOUR PARDON, BUT DO I *KNOW* YOU ?

YES. AND NO WE HAVE TRAVELED FAR TO MEET YOU SOON. ANOTHER WILL ARRIVE AND INVITE US TO FULFILL OUR DESTINIES
THAT WOMAN W.TH YOU! SHE'S A DEMON!
NO. WAIT--
BE SILENT!
DO NOT MOVE A MUSCLE!
!
YOU SHOULD EXERCISE MORE CAUTION W.TH THAT VOICE OF YOURS, OBO-SAN. AFTER ALL THEY ARE COMPELLED TO DO EXACTLY AS YOU COMMAND
AND IF THEY "DO NOT MOVE A MUSCLE," WELL THE HEART IS A MUSCLE
I RELEASE YOU
=wheeze=
=gasp=
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM US MY COMPANION IS NO DEMON
IN FACT, HER PEOPLE HAVE MORE IN COMMON W.TH YOU SAMURAI THAN YOU MIGHT GUESS
HOW IS IT THAT MY VOICE DID NOT COMMAND YOU?
ALL OF YOUR QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED SHORTLY
WE NEED ONLY ACCEPT THIS MAN'S CALL TO ARMS
YOU HAVE SPENT ALL YOUR LIFE SEARCHING FOR A CAUSE WORTHY OF YOUR SWORD, OBO SAN. NOW AT LAST, IT HAS FOUND YOU

PLANET ELYSIA
HOME OF THE FIRST
ALTWAAL, YOU SANCTIMONIOUS BUTCHER.
YOU KILLED MY DAUGHTER!
I HAVE RETURNED TO READY THE FIRST FOR WAR, INGRA! WAR DEMANDS ABSOLUTE DISCIPLINE NONE MAY THREATEN OUR SOLIDARITY!
YOUR DAUGHTER SLEW ONE OF OUR OWN, AND SHE PAID THE PRICE WILL YOU BE THE NEXT TO SUFFER MY JUDGMENT?
INGRA NOW IS NOT THE TIME CHALLENGING HIM OPENLY WILL ONLY
NEVER TOUCH ME AGAIN!
HE KILLED OUR CHILD AND YOU DO NOTHING?! WHAT DID I EVER SEE IN YOU, PYREM?!
I ALWAYS WONDERED THE SAME THING, INGRA
OH, HE'S CUTE, TO BE SURE IF YOU FIND SPINELESSNESS ATTRACTIVE BUT THAT'S ABOUT IT

HELLO, INGRA. HELLO, PYREM. TOO LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE I VISITED FAIR ELYSIA. I TRUST YOU HAVEN'T ALL FORGOTTEN ME...?
AND GREETINGS TO YOU, GREAT ALTWAAL! SO, THE LONG-LOST KING OF THE FIRST HAS DECIDED TO RETURN AFTER ALL?
I REMEMBER YOU...EVINLEA, WASN'T IT?
I HAVE BUSINESS WITH ALTWAAL, AND YOU ARE IN THE WAY.
Step aside, EVINLEA. NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR A bit player IN OUR PANTHEON TO STEAL THE LIMELIGHT.
RAAMUN. EVER THE DRAMATURGIST... AND STILL PLAYING TO THE CHEAP SEATS, I SEE.
ALLOW ME TO PUT THIS IN TERMS EVEN YOU WILL UNDERSTAND.
?
I WAS ONCE JUST AN UNDERSTUDY ON THE GRAND STAGE OF ELYSIA. BUT TODAY I'VE COME BACK TO "FLIP THE SCRIPT."
THIS ENSEMBLE MELODRAMA SHALL BECOME A ONE-WOMAN SHOW!

Alas, POOR EVINLEA...
...THIS GROTESQUE PROP IS HARDLY ENOUGH TO GET YOU TOP BILLING ON A CARD WITH INGRA, MUCH LESS UPSTAGE ALTWAAL'S LONG-AWAITED--
...encore...?!
WOMAN...
...BE SILENT.
A-KK-RGKH
NO MORE CLEVER BANTER, NO MORE QUIPS, NO MORE TALK!
KRACH
JUST DIE, DIE, DIE!!

MURDERER!

"MURDERER" SCARCELY BEGINS TO DESCRIBE ME...

THERE IS NO LANGUAGE DARK ENOUGH TO EXPLAIN WHAT WE ARE!

NEVERTHELESS, ALTWAAL--

--YOU'RE ABOUT TO *FIND OUT*...

NEXT: THE BATTLE OF ELYSIA!

PART THREE

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